

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE

Medigap and Other Supplemental Insurance



If you are in the Original Medicare Plan, you may want to buy a Medigap policy. A Medigap policy may help you lower your out-of-pocket costs.

The type of Medigap policy you buy can affect:

- How much you pay,
- What benefits you may have, and
- Which doctors you can see.

In addition, there are other programs that can help lower your health care costs.

MEDIGAP

Basics

A Medigap policy is a health insurance policy sold by private health insurance companies to help pay for some of the health care costs (“gaps”) that the **Original Medicare Plan** doesn’t cover.

There are 12 standardized Medigap policies, called **Plans “A” through “L.”** Each plan has a different set of benefits. You can easily compare policies from company to company because the plans are standardized. Each policy is different, but not all insurance companies sell all 12 policies. Call **1-800-MEDICARE** (1-800-633-4227) to get the number of the **State Health Insurance Assistance Program** in your state for help in choosing a policy.

Who Can Get a Medigap Policy

In most cases, you must have both Part A (Hospital Insurance) and Part B (Medical Insurance) of Medicare to buy a Medigap policy.

You May Need to Know

- By law, insurance companies may only sell one standardized policy at a time to a person with Medicare.

- If you have Medicaid, it is illegal in most cases for an insurance company to sell you a Medigap policy.
- You don’t need to buy a Medigap policy if you are in a Medicare Advantage Plan.

Buying a Medigap Policy

While people with Medicare aren’t required to buy Medigap policies, you may want to buy a policy if you choose to enroll in the Original Medicare Plan (Part A and Part B) to help pay some of the health care costs the Original Medicare Plan doesn’t cover.

The best time to buy a Medigap policy is during your Medigap open enrollment period. The open enrollment period is the 6 months starting on the first day of the month in which you are age 65 or older and are enrolled in Medicare Part B.

Medigap and the New Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage

Beginning in the fall of 2005, all private companies that sell Medigap policies with prescription drug coverage, plans H, I, and J, must send a notice to those policyholders telling them whether or not their coverage is at least as good as coverage through a Medicare prescription drug plan. If you receive one of these notices, it will explain your rights and choices.





Starting January 1, 2006, when Medicare prescription drug plans begin coverage, you won't be able to buy Medigap policies covering prescription drugs. If you currently have a Medigap policy with prescription drug coverage, you have several options to choose from to continue getting prescription drug coverage, including enrolling in a Medicare prescription drug plan. You should make a decision about how to get your prescription drug coverage before May 15, 2006. Read the notice from your Medigap insurer carefully and consider all of your options.

For More Information

- If you have a Medigap policy, contact your Medigap insurer for information about your Medigap policy options.
- For more information about Medigap policy costs and choices, call **1-800-MEDICARE** (1-800-633-4227). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048. You may also find information about Medigap policies at www.medicare.gov on the Web.
- In the fall of 2005 you will be able to get personalized information to help you find a Medicare prescription drug plan that meets your needs, by visiting www.medicare.gov or by calling **1-800-MEDICARE** (1-800-633-4227). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

Other Supplemental Insurance

Employer or Union Health Coverage

You can contact your or your spouse's current or former employer or union to find out if you can get health coverage through past or current employment.

(See **Employment-Related Drug Coverage** for information about employer/union retiree drug coverage.)

It is important to note that when you have employer or union health coverage and drop it, you may not be able to get it back. Check with your employer's or union's benefits administrator for more information.

Veterans' Benefits

If you are a veteran or have had any U.S. military service, call the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs at 1-800-827-1000 for information about veterans' benefits and services available in your area.

Military Retiree Benefits

TRICARE is a health care program for active duty and retired uniformed services members and their families. In general, Medicare pays first for Medicare-covered services. If Medicare doesn't pay the entire bill, TRICARE may pay some of the costs as the second payer. You are also eligible for drug coverage through the TRICARE Senior Pharmacy Program. Call 1-800-538-9552 for more information.

Medicare Savings Programs

There are programs that help people with Medicare save money each year. States have programs for people with limited income and resources that pay Medicare premiums, and may also pay Medicare deductibles and coinsurance, in some cases. Call **1-800-MEDICARE** (1-800-633-4227) for more information about Medicare Savings Programs. **Note:** Medicare Savings Programs may not be available in Guam, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa.

Medicaid

Medicaid is a joint Federal and state program that helps pay medical costs for some people with limited incomes and resources. Medicaid programs vary from state to state. For more information about Medicaid, call your state Medicaid office.

These materials were prepared in March 2005 by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. They are intended for training purposes only and are not legal documents.